

A WINTER HOLIDAY IN SWITZERLAND.

Imagine a sky of cloudless blue, snow-covered mountains, a keen, invigorating air, and dazzling, brilliant sunshine adding its warmth and blessedness, and you have some small idea of Adelboden on December 31st, 1905. It is impossible to describe what is beyond description—the glories of reflected sunset lights, purple, rose, and palest green; the blue distances; and that dazzling whiteness of the snow against the deep blue heavens, that makes one understand the meaning of the beautiful expression, "They shall be whiter than snow"—these are things to live and feel! "How good is our life—the mere living," says the poet, and one knows it to be true.

There is that in the air which makes one able to walk, skate, or ski miles in one day, and to get up the next morning ready to do it "not once, but again, and again, and again, and again, and again!"

They were nearly all English people in Adelboden, and nothing could be more delightful than the spirit of "camaraderie" and good-fellowship that pervaded the whole atmosphere. There is something so nice in seeing grey-haired ladies—as well as the paterfamilias and the happy school-boy—gaily careering down the toboggan-run, with a look of perfect enjoyment, one and all shouting the musical and magic word, "Achtung!" One takes out a toboggan here as one does a dog in England—in fact, a walk without one is not to be thought of. Little red, blue and green toboggans, differing according to the hotels, lie strewn all over the village and mountain pathways, and having left yours at the *bottom* of a hill, you gaily sit down on the next one you find—provided it is of the right colour—with the happy sense that possession is *ten* points of the law. Later on one sees two dear old St. Bernard dogs slowly towing a whole queue of toboggans up the hill, and feels "how thankful should rich folks be for them which they calls dogs!"

Then for the more adventurous spirits there is ski-ing—perfectly delightful (I believe!) when you can do it, and even more so when you cannot—for the spectators. In the first stages you do not ski—you are "ski-ed;" and I did not get beyond the passive voice! This is, however, quite the best way of seeing the country, as one can go for a good climb, and then come down the mountains on the untrodden snow at a great pace.

Bob-sleighing is another delightful sport, provided that there is a good steersman on the sleigh. As the familiar and musical "Achtung" resounds through the clear, frosty air, sung out by eight or ten voices, toboggans and their owners scatter right and left, as the bob-sleigh comes flying down the track. If one may be allowed a comparison, I should say, as the motor-car in England, so is the bob-sleigh in Switzerland—only less so.

Last, but not least—though ski-ists (active voice) would differ—comes the skating on perfect ice. It seems impossible to believe as one walks in the "smog" of dear old London, that happy mortals are skating in brilliant sunshine, without cloak or coat of any description, in this and many other happy Swiss valleys, in the beginning of January—and yet such is the case.

If it were not that I incur the risk of having that adjective—that caused John Gilpin to reply in great haste to his wife with a well-timed compliment—hurled at my head, I could write sheets more of the joys of a winter holiday in Switzerland, joys that must, however, be felt to be understood. I hope, and think, that if more people knew how perfectly delightful it is, this strenuous life in frost and snow and sunshine, they would sacrifice a summer to a winter holiday sometimes, and see and feel the glory and beauty, the invigorating and health-giving power of Switzerland in the winter.

E. M. E. W.